



Children and Families at Risk Working Group

Meeting Minutes

June 30, 2011

Voices for Illinois Children

In attendance:

Kathy Ryg, Voices for Illinois Children (Chair)
Tracy Smith, Feeding Illinois (Steering Committee Liaison)
Representative Patricia Bellock
Julie Mickelson, USDA
Barb Karacic, Holy Family Food Pantry
Dawn Melchiorre, Voices for Illinois Children
Ariel Arzu, Voice for Illinois Children, Intern
Matt Sanchez, Feeding Illinois
Kate Maehr, Greater Chicago Food Depository
Melissa Roy, Share Our Strength (SOS)
Penny Roth, IDHS
Mark Haller, ISBE
Doug Schenkelberg, GCFD

Children and Family Working Group Jurisdiction - Ms. Ryg reviewed the objectives and charge of the Working Group and the larger Commission to End Hunger.

Charge:

1. To develop an action plan that will close the gap within two year and to create a strategic plan.
2. Engage members in closing the gap
3. Public awareness of hunger

Defining the Issue and Goals of the Working Group – Working group members discussed the logical starting point to be improved access to existing federal and state programs and listed those programs:

SNAP

School Breakfast Program – school age children. Illinois has a very low participation rate. Two-years ago we were 51st and have moved up to 46th in the nation. Mandated breakfast in Illinois but utilization has been an issue. Chicago is using a universal breakfast model. It works in CPS because the poverty rate is so high. The model they chose is Breakfast in the Classroom which reduces stigma of certain children getting free breakfast because they don't have it at home. A very small but vocal group of parents at one school have objected. It has now been rolled out to all schools.

Outside of Chicago, the challenge has been transportation and timing of getting children to school and whether or not the time can be counted as instructional. Superintendent has issued a statement that breakfast time is instructional time but there is still misperception. Also in areas outside Chicago-metro, there's a feeling that people can take care of themselves without government intervention.

Action Step:

- First step – co-sign a letter supporting Chicago's efforts
- SOS: Arne Duncan has written a letter in support of school breakfast and indicating that the time is considered instructional. Melissa will reach out and see if we can get a letter for Illinois.
- SOS has some best practices from across the country that they can share.

National School Lunch Program – school age children

Special milk and fresh fruits and vegetables programs are also in the schools

SFSP – summer food program for children. Participation is very low- 15-16% nationally. In Chicago, they've done a good job of connecting summer programs with the schools which has helped boost participation. Barb from Holy Family Food Pantry in Wheaton shared that they've really increased their participation this year by working with the schools that they were providing back pack to. They've worked directly with the families and the community to build trust. They've added back pack to their meal distribution. One barrier to hosting summer food service sites is that federal nutrition reimbursement is inadequate and must be supplemented with private funding. SOS said that they have provided mini-grants in other states to help support the programs. Another barrier is that the administrative burden is large, there is a lot of documentation. To address this barrier, SOS has funded programs in other states to hire an individual to help multiple-sites develop and implement programs. Another barrier can be access to transportation for children to reach the site. SOS has funded a program in Arkansas where they used a bus to prepare and deliver the meals.

Parking lot: It would be helpful to have a heads up on some of the pilot opportunities that are coming down the line from USDA. If we know ahead of time, we can support the state in accessing these opportunities. Julie (USDA) said that she can work with us on that.

CACFP – child care and after school meals

CSFP – mostly serves elderly but there are a very small number of children served by this program.

WIC

WIC Farmer's Market

TEFAP (also known as EFP or USDA Commodities)

Disaster Assistance Program

School Program

Special Milk

Fresh Food and Lunch

There was also an acknowledgment of private dollars used to support programs including: food pantries, backpack programs, and faith-based organizations.

Melissa Roy from Share Our Strength (SOS) described the work her organization is part of in various other states including their work with foundations such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to tie the work to childhood obesity. SOS is providing grants to support the state level work and Illinois is a targeted state for them.

Additional Action Steps: Representative Bellock will investigate the Legislative Reference Bureau's (LRU) weekly briefing for legislators concerning federal grants to determine if it could be made public to aid IDHS and ISBE in identifying possible federal funding for new hunger related programs. This could aid in the development of a network of partners to collaborate with state agencies to apply for funds.

How to reach Working Group goals –

- ✓ More media interviews
- ✓ Co-sign with networks
- ✓ Support listening tours – will aid in identifying barriers
- ✓ Work to find lead non for profit organization to collaborate with
- ✓ Incorporating education and awareness of children and families unique issues within each working group

Recommendation Process - After the listening sessions to illicit more dialogue about the current programs, gaps, and opportunities to address hunger in children and families the committee will work on draft recommendations to the Commission.

Suggestions for other Potential Partners to the Working Group

- School districts: either someone from LUDA, management alliance, principal association
- Illinois Action for Children – Sessy Nyman for the childcare perspective
- PTA – parent representative
- Teacher unions

Future Meetings:

2nd or 3rd week of July –possibly meeting at a summer feeding site (Barb Karacic, Holy Family Food Pantry offered her site in Lake County) to pique the interest of Working Group members.